



U.S. Immigration
and Customs
Enforcement

News Release

December 13, 2005

COUPLE TRYING TO SMUGGLE MORE THAN \$70,000 NABBED BY ICE

SAN JUAN, Puerto Rico- A Netherlands Antilles couple bound for St. Maarten were arrested here Sunday by U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) agents for attempting to smuggle more than \$70,000.

Arnold R. Clarke, 58, and Bienvenida Beltre, 59, attempted to leave Luis Munoz Marin International Airport without declaring excess currency in the amount of \$73,034 in violation of Title 31, United States Code (USC) Section 5316.

Both Clarke and Beltre failed to declare to U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) inspectors that they were carrying more than \$10,000. A further inspection of the couple's luggage by CBP inspectors revealed that Clarke was in possession of \$42,726, while Beltre was in possession of \$30,308.

"Smuggling United States currency is a serious crime that we will not tolerate," said Lydia St. John-Mellado, acting special agent-in-charge of ICE in Puerto Rico. "We will apply the law, to its fullest extent, to those who think that Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands are easy conduits to smuggle contraband, humans and currency."

Clarke and Beltre are in federal custody at the Metropolitan Detention Center in Guaynabo, Puerto Rico.

The U.S. Attorney for the District of Puerto Rico has accepted the case for prosecution.

The public is reminded that a criminal indictment or complaint contain only charges and is not evidence of guilt. The defendants are presumed innocent and are entitled to a fair trial and the government has the burden of proving guilt beyond a reasonable doubt.

#ICE#

U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement was established in March 2003 as the largest investigative arm of the Department of Homeland Security. ICE is comprised of four integrated divisions that form a 21st century law enforcement agency with broad responsibilities for a number of key homeland security priorities.